

Matthew and I affirm; resolved: Single-gender classrooms would improve the quality of education in American public schools.

Contention One: Females are empowered.

Sub-point A: STEM education.

Katie Blue explains

Studies show that girls lose interest in computer science at a very early age. According to a Literature Review on Women in Computing done by the Association for Computing Machinery – Women [6], **basic gender differences between girls and boys leave girls frustrated with computers at a very early age.** Also, girls are sometimes less exposed to computers. **From a very early age, in a computing environment, boys take control while the girls sit back – even though they're entirely capable.** Society also has a negative impact on how females see males depicted as computer scientists. Most depictions of computer science are not glorified in nature and negatively imply that computer science is only for geeks and nerds.

To combat the fact that girls are conditioned at a young age to let the boys take charge, schools have begun experimenting with same sex classrooms. Research has shown that **environments that are all female can produce higher confidence levels in math, science and engineering. Intimidating perceptions that males are better in these subjects is eliminated in a same sex classroom** [8]. Some schools have adopted same sex classes as a strategy to enhance the learning experience of either girls or boys with positive results for girls [4]. Could the perceptions of computer science be more positive for females in a same sex classroom? Using previous research and building on the existing survey, I attempted to assess the perceptions of women in the classroom and whether or not the sex of the instructor impacted her perception.

The National Education Association furthers

Girls who learn in all-girl environments are believed to be more comfortable responding to questions and sharing their opinions in class and **more likely to explore more “nontraditional” subjects such as math, science, and technology.** In addition, advocates believe that when children learn with single-gender peers, they are more likely to attend to their studies, speak more openly in the classroom, and feel more encouraged to pursue their interests and achieve their fullest potential.

The Global Post corroborates

Careers in science, technology, engineering and math are among the highest-paid, but **women are underrepresented in these STEM careers.** In her book, "Delusions of Gender," Cordelia Fine points out that **girls' achievement in these subjects begins to diminish in middle school.** A number of factors are at play here, including **stereotypes that emphasize that women are bad at math. Stereotype threat, which occurs when a person under-performs when exposed to stereotypes about her group, can greatly diminish math and science scores** according to Fine. **Single-sex education, however, may reduce the effects of stereotype threat.** A 2011 study published in the "Journal of Educational Research" found that **girls in same-sex classrooms were not susceptible to stereotype threat, and** a 2011 study published in "Sex Roles" found that **girls who attend single-sex schools tend to perform better in STEM-related classes.**

This is important on a broader level. The Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers impacts **A broader view** I and many others would argue, **is that everyone needs a solid grounding in science, engineering, and math. In that sense, there is indeed a shortage—a STEM knowledge shortage. To fill that shortage,** you don't necessarily need a college or university degree in a STEM discipline, but **you do need to learn those subjects, and learn them well, from childhood** until you head off to college or get a job. **Improving everyone's STEM skills would clearly be good** for the workforce and for people's employment prospects, for public policy debates, and for everyday tasks like balancing checkbooks and calculating risks. And, of course, **when science, math, and engineering are taught well, they engage students' intellectual curiosity about the world and how it works.**

Sub-point B: Female leadership increases.

Eileen Flaherty initializes

In different studies performed throughout the country, there have been found to be both benefits and detriments to single sex education. Some advantages to single sex education include the benefits to young girls. The primary issue in creating single gender schools or classrooms was because girls were short-changed in mixed classrooms. Research has shown that **girls appreciate an environment in which they are neither competing with boys for the teachers attention nor being distracted by boy's behavior.** In single sex classrooms both boys and girls reported less distractions. **Girls then feel more comfortable expressing themselves**, because they are not afraid of being embarrassed by boys or having the class dominated by males. This allows girls to more likely feel good about getting good grades and not outshining boys because in a mixed classroom girl might receive mixed messages about being smart but also downplaying intelligence in trying to attract boys. Girls then spend more time on homework, academic activities and non-stereotypical extracurricular activities.¹⁶ **Single sex schools are also known to have more opportunity for leadership roles, which benefits females because males are more likely to take on leadership roles in mixed schools.**

Kirsten Hartman furthers

Women in single-sex settings generally receive more recognition for their accomplishments, through awards, scholarships, and opportunity for leadership positions. **These opportunities are ones which are typically awarded to males in coed schools.** **These forms of recognition serve as a confidence booster for these female students.** **An increase in confidence contributes to academic success and vocational motivation. In girl-only learning environments, girls are more often exposed to successful female role models.** There are frequently more female than male teachers and administrators in all-girl schools and the students which succeed as best athletes, class president and valedictorian are also women. These role models inspire girls and make them feel more capable and deserving of success. Female teachers and administrators can open girl's eyes to the various opportunities available to them as women, and guide them to overcome those social barriers which so unfairly exist.

The Sudikoff Family Institute for Education impacts

This study identifies several areas in which single-sex education appears to produce favorable outcomes for female students, especially in terms of their confidence, engagement, and aspirations, most notably in areas related to math and science. Thus, **while the benefits of single-sex education are fairly small, they tend to be in areas that have historically favored men and therefore represent a potentially effective vehicle for mitigating longstanding gender gaps.**

Contention Two: Minorities are empowered in a single-gender environment.

The Council on Foreign Relations underscores

"The real scourge of the U.S. education system—and its greatest competitive weakness—is the deep and growing achievement gap between socioeconomic groups that begins early and lasts through a student's academic career," writes Rebecca Strauss, associate director for CFR's Renewing America publications. **Wealthy students are achieving more, and the influence of parental wealth is stronger in the United States than anywhere else in the developed world.**

The Anthropology and Education Quarterly explains

As is increasingly common, **the needs of many of the students** in our study **had been inadequately met in their previous schools.** The single-sex setting gave them an opportunity for another chance at a successful academic life. **Freed from the distractions of the other gender, students were able to focus on their lessons in a new and more meaningful way.** They also were able to have more intimate and open conversations with peers and teachers.

State **funding for the single-sex public schools helped by providing monies for resources and special services that were sadly absent from other schools.** The benefit of state funding was starkly clear when funds for the single-sex schools were not awarded the second year. At Evergreen, the loss of funding resulted in a rapid deterioration of the situation for students in the single-sex setting. The teaching staff was reduced, extra programs that dealt specifically with the needs of low-income students were cut, and by year 3, Evergreen had closed its doors. At the time we ended our study, of the six original academies, Pine was the only one still open thanks to continuing district support. Even with that support,

however, Pine administrators were scrambling to get more grant funds in order to keep the school open. Finally, Palm closed its doors, much to the sadness of students, teachers, and parents; the district administration refused to cover the added expense created by the single-sex setting.

Contention Three: Teen pregnancies are addressed.

America's Promise Alliance explains the prevalence

The relationship between academic failure and teen pregnancy is strong, and because teen pregnancy affects the educational achievement of teens themselves as well as that of their children, those concerned

about educating young people should also be concerned with preventing teen pregnancy. Moreover, given the increasing demands in schooling necessary to qualify for a well-paying job, it is more important than ever for teens to finish high school and attain post-secondary education when possible.

The relationship between education and teen pregnancy works both ways. That is, teen pregnancy often has a negative impact on education. It is also the case that **[and] school achievement, attendance, and involvement helps reduce the risk of teen pregnancy.** Put another way, staying in school and getting an education helps prevent teen pregnancy.

Kristen Hartman impacts

Teenage sex and unwanted pregnancy is a particular field of interest for many individuals who study single-sex vs. coeducational schools. It is not surprising that **teenage sex and unwanted pregnancies are more common at coed schools.** Not only are **boys more accessible to girls in coeducational environments**, but also the fact that **[and] girls and boys share a social network, which makes it difficult for girls to say no** (NASSPE). **Peer pressure surrounding sex is a great deal more influential in coed school environments because boys and girls coexist in the same social network, which gives girls less control.** Once one couple in their circle of friends starts becoming sexually active, they all do because they are all intermixed and feel pressure to live up to that standard. Teenage pregnancy in the U.S. is currently a major issue. In 2009, the teenage pregnancy rates increased in 26 states (Jayson, 2009).

Further, pregnancies are handled with pregnancy schools. R. Murray Thomas underscores

From the outset, pregnancy schools were controversial and, as the years advanced, the controversy grew. **Advocates** of congregating pregnant girls in the special schools **said that staff members were specialists in ways of teaching expectant mothers and meeting their** physical and emotional **needs. In addition, the students were with schoolmates whose life conditions were much the same as their own, so they could understand and support each other.** Furthermore, the pregnant girls were not subject to the gibes and social rejection of unsympathetic students in regular high schools. Proponents bolstered this favorable view of special schools with such statistics as those from Milwaukee's Lady Pitts School where, in 2003, "56 out of the 60 students who were eligible to graduate received their diplomas – a rate that far exceeds that at most Milwaukee high schools – [and] only 10 percent of Lady Pitts students get pregnant a second time, less than half the national average" (Pardini, 2003). In 2001, the continuing need for such schools was suggested by a survey that revealed there apparently were more than 20,000 mothers in New York City under age 21 who had yet to finish high school, but there were only 500 spaces in the four special schools for pregnant and parenting teens (Fertig, 2004).